

MAR 01 2007

SENATE RESOLUTION

CONDEMNING THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION
SERVICES' FEE INCREASE.

1 WHEREAS, our Nation's and State's newcomers are making
2 valuable contributions to the social, cultural, and economic
3 life of the United States of America and the State of Hawaii;
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, Hawaii is home to many hardworking, taxpaying,
7 legal permanent residents who are eager to become full Americans
8 by pursuing the dream of U.S. citizenship; and

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10 WHEREAS, on January 31, 2007, the United States Citizenship
11 and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced a proposal that would
12 raise the fees for starting the naturalization process from \$400
13 to \$675, an increase of sixty-nine per cent; and

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15 WHEREAS, the USCIS anticipates that the fee hike will go
16 into effect in June 2007; and

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18 WHEREAS, naturalization fees have been soaring since 1991,
19 when legal permanent residents paid \$90 to apply for U.S.
20 citizenship; and

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22 WHEREAS, naturalization fee increases result from our
23 Nation's fundamentally flawed system of financing immigration
24 services, which requires the USCIS to rely almost exclusively on
25 application fees to fund the delivery of services to immigrants;
26 and

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28 WHEREAS, the USCIS believes that it needs this massive fee
29 hike to pay for major infrastructure investments and process
30 enhancements, such as improvements in the timeliness of
31 background checks, modernization of its outdated business
32 systems through technology upgrades, facilities improvements and
33 enhancements in its personnel training and recruitment programs;
34 and
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1 WHEREAS, there are at least 100,000, legal permanent
2 residents in Hawaii who are eligible to apply for U.S.
3 citizenship; and

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5 WHEREAS, according to data from the 2000 Census, 38.4 per
6 cent of Hawaii's non-citizen households have annual incomes that
7 are less than \$25,000; and

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9 WHEREAS, the proposed fee increase would place a nearly
10 insurmountable barrier in the path of legal permanent residents
11 who seek to naturalize, many of whom have limited financial
12 resources; and

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14 WHEREAS, this body believes that the system for funding
15 immigration services should be a partnership between newcomers
16 and the federal government where applicants pay a reasonable fee
17 for quality service; and

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19 WHEREAS, the USCIS' proposed fee increase is contrary to
20 the spirit of our Nation's and State's tradition of welcoming
21 and integrating immigrants, and sends legal permanent residents
22 the wrong message at a time when they are seeking to embrace
23 U.S. citizenship; and

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25 WHEREAS, naturalization benefits Hawaii by helping to
26 ensure that newcomers become full participants in our Nation's
27 civic life; and

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29 WHEREAS, the full participation of newcomers enriches and
30 maintains the vitality of our democracy; now, therefore,

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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
33 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007,
34 that this body condemns the proposed fee increase by USCIS and
35 requests a halt on the fee increase for all naturalization
36 applications; and

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body calls on the Director
39 of the USCIS to immediately provide President George W. Bush and
40 the U.S. Congress with accurate information to ascertain the
41 amount of federal appropriations that would be needed to enable
42 the USCIS to modernize its operations, and enhance its
43 naturalization services, without raising the naturalization fee;
44 and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body calls on President
3 George W. Bush and the United States Congress to address the
4 fundamental problems in our Nation's system for financing
5 immigration services by providing appropriations to supplement
6 fee revenue to cover costs of major USCIS expenses such as
7 infrastructure investments, process enhancements and capital
8 improvements; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
11 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the USCIS, the
12 President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States
13 House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the
14 United States Senate for inclusion in the Congressional Record,
15 and each member of Hawaii's Congressional delegation.
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OFFERED BY


